

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 L-01

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FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9143

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 0332

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ML, UV

SUBJECT: MALI-UPPER VOLTA BORDER DISPUTE

REF: STATE 27978

1. PRESIDENT LAMIZANA ASKED TO SEE ME URGENTLY AT NOON TODAY.

2. AS I EXPECTED, PRESIDENT REFERRED TO AMBASSADOR YAGUIBOU'S EFFORTS TO PURCHASE ARMS IN THE UNITED STATES AND SAID THAT APPLICATION FOR EXPORT LICENSE HAD NOW BEEN FILED WITH STATE DEPARTMENT. HE URGED ME TO RECOMMEND PROMPT AND FAVORABLE ACTION ON THIS APPLICATION.

3. LAMIZANA ADDED THAT I COULD GIVE ALL ASSURANCES TO MY GOVERNMENT THAT UPPER VOLTA HAD NO AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS TOWARDS MALI OR ANY OTHER NATION. HOWEVER, GIVEN MALI'S OVERWHELMING MILITARY SUPERIORITY, IT WAS DOUBTFUL THAT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND THROUGH THE LOME MEDIATION COMMISSION WHOSE ACTIVITIES WERE ALREADY SERIOUSLY HAMPEERED BY MALI'S UNCOOPERATIVE
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ATTITUDE. IF, AS HE FULLY EXPECTED, MEDIATION COMMIS-

SION EVENTUALLY FOUND UPPER VOLTA'S CLAIMS TO BE VALID, MALI WOULD NOT ACCEPT THE FINDINGS AND WOULD CONTINUE ITS AGGRESSION. ONLY WAY TO PUT SOME SENSE IN MALIAN LEADERS' HEADS WAS FOR UPPER VOLTA TO HAVE A HALF-WAY CREDIBLE DEFENSE POSTURE WHICH WOULD MAKE IT MORE COSTLY FOR MALI TO CONTINUE ON ITS PRESENT COURSE.

4. THE SMALL AMOUNT OF ARMS WHICH WAS BEING PURCHASED IN THE U.S., LAMIZANA CONTINUED, WOULD NOT GIVE UPPER VOLTA THE CAPABILITY TO ATTACK MALI OR TO INFLICT DEFEAT ON MALI'S ARMED FORCES IF THEY ATTACKED UPPER VOLTA AGAIN. IT WOULD, HOWEVER, PERMIT THE VOLTAN ARMY TO GIVE A GOOD ACCOUNT OF ITSELF IN CONTRAST TO THE HUMILIATING EXPERIENCE OF LAST DECEMBER. HE INTIMATED THAT THE VERY EXISTENCE OF HIS REGIME MIGHT DEPEND ON THE DEPARTMENT'S DECISION, AND SAID THAT VOLTAN OPINION WOULD NEVER BELIEVE THAT A MILITARY REGIME SUCH AS HIS WAS INCAPABLE OF PROVIDING ARMS FOR THE VOLTAN ARMY.

5. I TOLD LAMIZANA THAT I WAS AWARE OF THE APPLICATION FROM COLT FIREARMS FOR AN EXPORT LICENSE WHICH, I UNDERSTOOD, WAS PRESENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION IN THE DEPARTMENT. I SAID I DID NOT KNOW WHEN A DECISION WOULD BE MADE BUT THAT I WOULD REPORT OUR CONVERSATION TO WASHINGTON IMMEDIATELY AND WOULD, OF COURSE, LET HIM KNOW OF ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THIS MATTER.

6. COMMENT: IN CONTRAST WITH OUR CONVERSATION ON SAME SUBJECT JANUARY 14 (OUAGA 0101), PRESIDENT LAMIZANA APPEARED TO BE REALLY CONCERNED (I WOULD ALMOST SAY DESPERATE) AND HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN FULLY BRIEFED THIS TIME ON REQUIREMENT FOR EXPORT LICENSE. I HAD IMPRESSION HE WAS PUTTING ALL HIS EGGS IN UNITED STATES BASKET AND WAS DISCOUNTING POSSIBILITY OF ACQUIRING ARMS SOMEWHERE ELSE.

7. I DO HOPE THAT DEPARTMENT'S DECISION WILL BE POSITIVE BUT, IF IT HAS TO BE OTHERWISE, I BELIEVE THAT LAMIZANA SHOULD BE TOLD WITHOUT DELAY SO THAT HE MIGHT STILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO FIND OTHER SOURCES. HIS
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REGIME IS REASONABLE AND MODERATE AND I THINK IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO HELP HIM OUT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE IN THIS DIFFICULT SITUATION.

8. I FULLY EXPECTED THAT LAMIZANA WOULD BRING UP SUBJECT OF UPPER VOLTA'S VOTE ON PRG ISSUE AT LAW OF WAR CONFERENCE (GENEVA 0767) AND COMPARE IT WITH MALI'S VOTE. HE DID NOT DO SO AND, FOR MY PART, I DID NOT

FEEL IT WAS RIGHT OCCASION TO EXPRESS U.S. GOVERNMENT'S
GRATITUDE.
GRAHAM

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